



Group Against Smog and Pollution, Inc. Hotline



Fall 2005

www.gasp-pgh.org

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Update: Shenango, Inc. and the Law

by Sue Seppi, GASP Project Manager

Our readers may remember reading in the Summer 2005 Hotline that the Shenango Coke Battery on Neville Island had fallen into such disrepair that, in the second quarter of 2005 alone, the company experienced over 100 air quality related violations. Members of the GASP-administered Smoke Readers Program and other community members reported observing repeated emission problems at the battery. GASP board member Walter Goldberg, also a member of the Air Pollution Control Advisory Committee to the Board of Health, asked for a review of Shenango's performance at the Advisory Committee Meeting in late May 2005. Jim Thompson, chief of the Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) Enforcement

and Air Quality Program, gave the review and was clearly upset with Shenango's performance. He quoted such performance statistics for April 2005 as 13.5% compliance rate for battery door leakage and 36% compliance rate for pushing at the battery. Mr. Thompson further indicated that a significant fine would be forthcoming.

On July 21, 2005, ACHD served an Enforcement Order on Shenango Coke that appeared to provide a firm, creative remedy to the runaway air pollution violations taking place at the facility. The two components of the order required Shenango to extend the coking cycle from 18 hours to 24 hours and to pay a significant fine of

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GASP Gears Up for Fall Event: "Transportation Solutions"

by Meliza Jackson, Event Planning Committee Chair

Group Against Smog and Pollution, Inc. (GASP) is a non-profit citizens' group in Southwestern Pennsylvania working for a healthy, sustainable environment. Founded in 1969, GASP has been a diligent watchdog, educator, litigator, and policy-maker on many environmental issues, with a focus on air quality in the Pittsburgh region.

Fasten your seatbelts; it's going to be a bumpy ride as GASP revs up for our **annual benefit event, "Transportation Solutions: Putting America in the Driver's Seat," on Saturday, October 1, 2005 from 6:30 to 10:30 PM at Rodef Shalom in Oakland.** Speaker Isaac Porche, III will anticipate the coming showdown for supremacy among hybrid-electrics, plug-ins, hydrogen fuel cell and diesel powered vehicles, as well as other solutions to America's oil dependence. With transportation burning up 70% of the oil we use and giving off one-third of total carbon emissions in the U.S., we can procrastinate

no longer. Dr. Porche, a judge for the Automotive News PACE Awards that are given to innovative automotive manufacturing suppliers, will share with us some recent studies from the RAND Corporation, where he is a Research Scientist.



Dr. Isaac Porche

Bob Banerjee believes that one solution lies in a new Pittsburgh energy technology firm, Capital Technologies International,

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GASP Legal Update

by Elizabeth Rosemeyer, GASP Policy & Outreach Coordinator

GASP's legal actions in opposition to permits issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for a waste coal-fired power plant in Washington County and for a coke plant in Cambria County continue. (See Summer 2005 Hotline article, "GASP Appeals Two DEP Actions.") Both of these cases have entered and remain in the discovery phase—the gathering and exchange of information—which will continue through the fall. Additionally, GASP has joined two more law suits: one local and one national.

Wellington Development, Greene Energy

On July 29, 2005, GASP, local citizens, and the National Parks Conservation Association filed an appeal against a proposed waste coal-fired power plant to be located near Nemaocolin, Greene County. Similar to GASP's objections to the proposed waste coal-fired plant in Washington County, GASP believes DEP did not require as strict emission controls for harmful pollutants as the law requires. Further, GASP believes the permit does not protect valuable wilderness areas from these harmful pollutants, which could adversely affect visibility in Dolly Sods, Otter Creek and Shenandoah National Park.

The proposed Greene Energy plant includes two waste coal-fired circulating fluidized bed boilers and a steam generator capable of producing 580 gross megawatts of power.

Clean Air Interstate Rule

GASP joined with Appalachian Mountain Club, National Parks Conservation Association, and Natural Resources Defense Council in a Petition for Review of two ancillary issues addressed by EPA in its recently promulgated Clean Air Interstate Rule (CAIR). The two issues relate to EPA's attempts to weaken existing Clean Air Act protections in the areas of visibility improvement and future rules to reduce

regional pollution transport. The Petition for Review, which was filed in federal appeals court, does not challenge CAIR itself, and will not impact the emission caps or compliance schedules in the EPA rule.

In addition to GASP's action, the state of North Carolina filed suit because it believes EPA's trading system might not yield pollution cuts as projected over the next decade. North Carolina is concerned that CAIR will not adequately limit emissions from electric utilities in upwind states, consequently leaving some of its counties out of compliance with EPA's new air quality standards.

Also filing suit are a dozen industry representatives from a wide range of power companies dealing in coal, natural gas and nuclear generation. These companies believe CAIR goes too far in seeking to reduce smog and soot emissions at utilities in 28 eastern states and Washington, D.C. 🚲

Transportation Solutions Event continued from page 1

where he and his colleagues will soon be producing biodiesel fuel from vegetable oils and animal fats. CTI and Carnegie Mellon University have co-developed this process of manufacturing synthetic diesel that they say is faster, less expensive, and safer than forerunner methods. Mr. Banerjee will describe and answer questions about the process and the cutting-edge facility on Neville Island which will make CTI Pennsylvania's first commercial producer of clean-burning biodiesel.

If you're ready to be scintillated by *sangria* and transported by *tapas* (including tasty treats from Ibiza Tapas & Wine Bar and quesadillas from Qdoba) you'll enjoy the food and drink at this event, which will also feature an increased

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GASP Mission Statement

GASP will act to obtain for the residents of southwestern Pennsylvania clean air, water, and land in order to create the healthy, sustainable environment and quality of life to which we are entitled.

Methods of Achieving Mission

GASP is a citizens' group based in Southwestern PA which focuses on Allegheny County environmental issues. When pertinent to these concerns, we participate in state and national environmental decisions.

We believe in the public's right to receive accurate and thorough information on these issues and to actively participate in the decision making process.

To achieve our environmental goals on behalf of our membership, GASP will advocate, educate, serve as an environmental watchdog, mobilize action, and litigate when necessary.

We will work both independently and in cooperation with like-minded individuals and groups as determined by the Board of Directors.

We will uphold GASP's reputation for scientific integrity, honesty, and responsible involvement.

Citizens Will Play Critical Role in Enforcing New Idling Regulation

by Rachel Filippini, GASP Executive Director

Effective July 10, 2005, the **Diesel Powered Motor Vehicle Idling Regulation** is another tool Allegheny County residents can use to reduce their exposure to diesel exhaust. An idling limit of five consecutive minutes for heavy-duty diesel powered motor vehicles is now in effect, just as it is for buses that since last year have been subject to Allegheny County's rule for school bus idling. The newly affected vehicles include trucks, waste haulers, Port Authority buses and tour buses. As with the school bus regulation, there are some exemptions, including if the outside temperature is less than 40 degrees Fahrenheit or above 75 degrees Fahrenheit, in which case idling will be allowed for 20 minutes in an hour. To view the entire regulation, please visit <http://www.gasp-pgh.org/diesel/210592.pdf>

Similar to their crucial role in the school bus regulation enforcement, citizens will play an absolutely essential role in enforcing the Diesel Powered Motor Vehicle Idling Regulation. With far too few inspectors, the Allegheny County Health Department will not be able to track idling adequately. Citizens should call the health department at 412-687-2243 or their municipal police departments if they witness a violation of this regulation. 🚲



PHOTO BY JONATHAN NACE

To help alert truck and bus drivers to the new regulation, the PennDOT's Pittsburgh Regional Traffic Management Center has posted warning signs on area parkways.

If you see someone violating the Diesel Powered Motor Vehicle Idling or School Bus Idling Regulation call 412-687-ACHD (2243) or your municipality.

The Alternative Fuels Incentive Grant Program: An opportunity for school districts and individuals to make a difference

What is it?

Pennsylvania's Alternative Fuels Incentive Grant (AFIG) Program provides financial assistance and information on alternative fuels and vehicles, hybrid vehicles and anti-idling technology. The AFIG Fund was created in 1992. Its purpose is to:

- ▶ reduce PA's dependence on imported oil,
- ▶ improve PA's environmental quality, and
- ▶ foster economic development by encouraging the transfer and commercialization of innovative energy technologies and the use of fuels indigenous to the Commonwealth.

Where does the money come from?

The fund receives about \$3.4 to \$4 million annually from the Pennsylvania General Fund.

Who and what is eligible for funding?

Eligible applicants for incentive grants are schools and vocational school districts, municipal authorities, counties, cities, boroughs, incorporated towns, townships, county institution districts, corporations, partnerships and nonprofit entities incorporated or registered in the Commonwealth, and Commonwealth residents.

Eligible alternative motor fuels and fuel systems are compressed natural gas (CNG), liquefied natural gas (LNG), liquid propane gas (LPG), ethanol (E85), methanol (M85), hydrogen, hythane, electricity, coal-derived liquid fuels, fuels derived from biological materials and fuels determined by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Energy as meeting the requirements of Section 301 of the Energy Policy Act of 1992 (42 U.S.C.A. 51321(2)).

The following projects are eligible for funding:

- ▶ Purchasing alternative fuel vehicles, including hybrid electric vehicles.
- ▶ Converting or repowering existing vehicles to operate on an alternative fuel.
- ▶ Purchasing and installing alternative fuel refueling facilities.
- ▶ Purchasing and installing recharging facilities.
- ▶ Developing and evaluating innovative alternative fuel vehicles and developing refueling or recharging facilities.

For more information, go to: <http://www.dep.state.pa.us> and type in keyword: alternative fuels. 🚲

GASP President Responds to Inaccurate News Article

The letter below was written in response to an article published by the Johnstown Tribune-Democrat on July 24, 2005. A link to the original article can be found on the GASP website: <http://www.gasp-pgh.org/news/gaspinnews.html>

August 2, 2005

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To the Editor:

I'm writing in response to the July 24 article entitled, "Proposed coke plant fires heated debate." In a nutshell, the article can be summed up like this: A knight in shining armor (Sun Coke Co.) wants to build a "state of the art" coke plant in Cambria County, bringing many jobs, little pollution, and "clean electricity" from waste heat. Sadly, interference from meddling, misguided environmental groups "from the outside" is threatening to delay or scuttle this plan. They present "misleading figures," are running around like "loose cannons," and are being "alarmist." Sounds pretty bad, eh?

Colorful descriptions aside, what are the facts of the matter? Group Against Smog and Pollution (GASP) is challenging the plant permit for two main reasons: They believe the permitting process was conducted in a flawed manner, and the resulting permit itself is flawed. There was insufficient notice and opportunity for citizens and other stakeholders to comment on the permit. Because the permit was issued just one day before the EPA declared Cambria Co. as being out of compliance with federal pollution law, having unhealthy levels of particulate pollution, the plant would (legally) be allowed to emit more pollutants and/or avoid offsetting that pollution, than it would under a more stringent permit.

As the article admits, this will be a "massive coke-making project." Large coke plants by their very nature - even new, non-recovery types - are polluting operations that release toxic chemicals and particulate pollution into the air, contrary to the impression given by the article. According to the plant's permit, the plant would be allowed to emit 543 tons/year of soot, 3661 tons/year of SO₂, 1365 tons/year of NO_x, and 47 lbs/year of toxic Mercury.

Just as surely as the coke plant would bring needed jobs to Cambria Co., as currently permitted, it would exacerbate the county's existing pollution problems. Is it not, therefore, reasonable to push the state to require the best pollution control technology at this plant, thereby minimizing the negative environmental and public health impacts? For example, the plant would be allowed to entirely bypass pollution controls on an individual coke oven during times of certain maintenance, thus releasing numerous hazardous pollutants. If the permit required that one extra set of controls be installed, this need to vent raw coke oven gasses would be eliminated, to the benefit of local air quality. But to do so would make the plant more expensive to build, costing Sun Coke more money. That's the bottom line.

It's easier to write off "outsider" interference than to take a fair, open-minded look at the validity of the points and concerns being raised. Incidentally, I and fellow hiking enthusiasts have been to Cambria Co. a number of times, where we enjoy hiking the LHHT and Johnstown neighborhoods (picking up litter we see along the way), riding the Inclined Plane, visiting the excellent Flood Museum, and dining in the region's restaurants. So we're not naive strangers to the area. I don't really buy into the outsider notion anyhow - as if harmful pollution from a major source stops at the edge of a municipal (or state) boundary and those living outside of that immediate area aren't affected in any way and have no right to be concerned and act. We're all in this together - there are always folks living downwind or downstream.

I was simultaneously amused and disturbed to read a quote attributed to me in the article by its author, Susan Evans. I've never spoken with her.

Jonathan Nadle
GASP President
Pittsburgh, PA

Brewin' Biodiesel

by Bridget Yupcavage, GASP Administrative Assistant

What happens when you mix a little bit of methanol, a little bit of lye and a lot of vegetable oil? You get biodiesel! Okay, so the process is a bit more scientific than that, but once you learn the basics and have the right measurements, it makes you wonder why more people aren't using it to fuel vehicles with diesel engines.

I was invited to join a group of students from Pittsburgh Transportation Equity Project's Youth Policy Institute (YPI), who gathered at the Red Star Iron Works in Lawrenceville to learn more about biodiesel fuel. The YPI students, under the supervision of Americorp VISTA volunteer Anissa Tanweer, meet once a week to discuss biodiesel and ways to inform the public of its environmental and economic importance. With the help of Greg Boulos, who just completed his graduate thesis on biodiesel production, and Nathaniel Doyno, a biodiesel advocate and member of GASP, we actu-



Two biodiesel "brewers" fill a pick-up truck with a new batch of biodiesel fuel



Student Donnell Harrell (left) mixes biodiesel ingredients with "brewmaster" Greg Boulos and another participant.

ally got to see firsthand how easy it is to make biodiesel fuel.

In addition to making a personal batch, we also compared emission levels of a diesel truck running on regular diesel fuel vs. biodiesel fuel. Using the GASP handheld particulate monitor, we determined that the particulate levels were less with the biodiesel than with the regular diesel. Not only did the monitor pick up the difference but everyone involved with the project noticed a difference; the exhaust from the biodiesel-fueled trucks smelled like french fries, and there was much less black exhaust (harmful particulates) coming out of the tailpipe.

The YPI students, who range in age from 13 to 17, will be going to different parks this fall, with a biodiesel truck following close behind, handing out literature on the alternative fuel. 🚲

Brew 'N' Biodiesel

Join GASP, The Environmental Justice Institute, and Construction Junction at Brew 'N' Biodiesel, a unique and fun event for ages 21 and over. Make and take home your own batch of biodiesel from waste vegetable oil, sample selections from local breweries, and enjoy an evening of local music. Proceeds will support the Steel City Biofuels, Pittsburgh's first biofuels cooperative. Tickets are \$10.

When: Friday, November 18, 2005 7 PM-MIDNIGHT

Where: Construction Junction

More info: Call the GASP office at (412) 325-7382 or email bridget@gasp-pgh.org



Artist Gifts GASP with Powerful Environmental Image

Meliza Jackson of GASP interviewed Pittsburgh artist Shawn Quinlan, who will be attending "Transportation Solutions."

Shawn Quinlan says that, even in childhood, he knew that as an adult he'd "be doing something with fabric." But after studying commercial art and fashion illustration at the Art Institute of Pittsburgh and taking studio art classes, he didn't know the first thing about sewing.

That changed when Shawn's stepmother brought home a 1949 Singer sewing machine. He taught himself to sew, got ideas from sewing shows on TV, and began to quilt. The results are both playful and sharply political. "This is how I communicate," he acknowledges.

Shawn first showed his work in 1998 in one local and one national show, and promptly won jurors' prizes in both. Last year he averaged one show a month, including one at the Warhol, and his work was featured in the international *Fiberarts Magazine*. This year the Carnegie Museum of Art made a Purchase Award of one of his quilts.

Now Shawn is donating the image of his thought-provoking piece *What Would Jesus Drive?* for GASP's use. Items carrying the image of this environmental statement will be available for sale only from GASP.

Although not a highly religious person, Shawn says that the hypocritical twisting of ethical examples such as Jesus frustrates him. Some of his quilts speak to that frustration, but their "tongue in cheek" quality triggers something in



Shawn Quinlan and his quilted artwork, *What Would Jesus Drive?*

the viewer—usually, something other than offense, even when religious symbols are included. *What Would Jesus Drive?* was conceived when at his WTAE-TV workplace Shawn edited a news segment on an Evangelical Environmental Network initiative by the same name. "I go with the flow—sometimes, it takes me in a whole other direction," Shawn explained. "I trust my instincts," rather than having an advance plan.

Shawn is grateful that he quilts in this era, when

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Transportation Solutions Event continued from page 2

amount of time for mingling and munching. Allowing for an interesting array of dishes to be tried, the tapas "small plates" from Spain have captured the American fancy, and we expect them to *fuel* a lively evening.

Want a sneak preview of items in the "Something for Everyone" Silent Auction where some people do their holiday shopping? Check our website at <http://www.gasp-pgh.org/events> for auction items, which will be posted as they are received. All bidding takes place at the event, with starting bids for some items as low as \$5. Items will appeal to audiences as diverse as babies and beach bums; film buffs and sports lovers; picnickers and museum-goers; Beatles fans and opera aficionados; wine connoisseurs and lovers of fine crafts; and more!

Helping to keep the good times rolling will be the event Honorary Committee:

Fred Brown, Executive Director, Pittsburgh Transportation Equity Project

Stephen Donahue, Co-Founder, Save Our Transit

Ann S. Francis, Allegheny County Board of Health
Brenda Frazier, Allegheny County Council Member, District #13

David Ginns, Transportation Specialist, Sustainable Pittsburgh

Deborah Lange, Executive Director, Steinbrenner Institute for Environmental Education and Research

Dwight Mayo, President, Transportation Solutions, Inc.

Jose Ernesto Mieres, Listserv Moderator, Pennsylvania Biodiesel Initiative

Wendy Ruano, Program Director, Earth Force

Paul Skoutelas, Senior Vice President, Parsons Brinckerhoff

All proceeds from this fun and educational fundraiser underwrite GASP's year-round education and advocacy activities. Information about registration and tickets, which start at the \$35 level and include free parking, is available online at <http://www.gasp-pgh.org/events>. If you didn't receive your invitation or want to make a tax-deductible donation of a silent auction item, call the office at 412-325-7382. ♻️

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\$252,000. The ACHD performance evaluation that would affect future upgrades or downgrades of the coking cycle length seemed especially effective.

Shenango quickly appealed both components of the enforcement order, however, which quickly resulted in a reduction from the original 24-hour coking cycle to one of 20 hours and an extension of one week for implementation. On the positive side for air quality, five ovens were taken out of service for repair.

On August 30, 2005 the appeal was settled with a final consent agreement. The agreement called for an accelerated program of oven repairs with final repairs completed by February 15, 2006. ACHD will continue its innovative performance assessment weekly, allowing for a boost in production if the compliance rate of the ovens not on the repair list is greater than 95%. On the flip side, if the compliance rate falls below 90%, production would be slowed by further extending the coking cycle. The fine was reduced to \$200,000.

GASP was pleased that the final negotiated consent agreement retained many of the strengths in the original order, but we remain concerned that backsliding on the enforcement action occurred. "Backsliding and delay of enforcement actions sends the wrong message to the community and to a company that is a chronic violator of Allegheny County air quality regulations," said Rachel Filippini, GASP's Executive Director.

GASP also is uneasy that the agreement will not keep Shenango in compliance with air quality regulations in the future. Shenango has historically been a repeat offender of air quality rules resulting in several federal consent orders and millions of dollars in fines. In June 2004, the number of coke oven inspectors at ACHD was reduced from two to one. **Sustained enforcement by ACHD is imperative to protect air quality and the health of nearby residents.**

Karen Grzywinski, a local community resident and GASP board member who has kept watch on air quality emissions at Shenango for several years, was disappointed, saying, "Negotiating with Shenango has gone nowhere for 25 years. ACHD took a hard stand which Shenango deserved and then they backed down. Once again, Shenango is calling the shots." As a certified smokereader, Karen's reports of Shenango's violations were instrumental in starting the ACHD's enforcement process.

Nevertheless, GASP is satisfied that ACHD arrived at a final agreement that already appears to be improving the air, but will it be enough to keep Shenango in compliance with air quality regulations in the future? Sporadic enforcement of air quality regulations is not effective or acceptable. ACHD must continue sustained observations of Shenango and instigate strong, effective enforcement sooner rather than later, should it be necessary. ♻️

Artist Shawn Quinlan continued from page 6

forerunners have paved the way to acceptability in the art world. Computers have revolutionized the art of quilting, including sewing machines; nowadays, Shawn "free-motion quilts" using a computer-assisted Bernina. Internet sales are an important resource for a fabric collage artist such as Shawn, who also acquires novelty fabrics from flea markets, big box stores, garage sales and wall hanging import shops. The central motif in *What Would Jesus Drive?* was cut from a discount store's John Deere kit for a woman's vest.

Shawn's works will be exhibited October 8–November 4 at the Frank Center for Creative Arts, Shepherd University, Shepherdstown, WV, and will be featured in a fall PBS-TV program on Pennsylvania quilters. The *What Would Jesus Drive?* items, exclusive with GASP, will premiere at "Transportation Solutions," GASP's benefit event on October 1 (see front page), and after that may be ordered from the GASP website. ♻️

Join GASP Today!

- \$35 Grassroots Supporters (\$15 low income/student rate)
- \$60 Grassroots Contributors
- \$100 Grassroots Patrons
- \$250 Clean Air Defenders
- \$500 Clean Air Protectors
- \$___ Other

Call GASP at (412) 325-7382 to learn about automatic monthly giving, deducted directly from your checking account or charged to your credit card. An easy, hassle-free way to support GASP all year round!

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All contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. Group Against Smog and Pollution, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. The official registration and financial information of GASP may be obtained from the Department of State by calling 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

Interest Fuels Youth

We have been advised that a number of interested people, most of them youth, would like to attend GASP's "Transportation Solutions" event (see front page) but are unable to afford a ticket. Sincere interest in the topics runs deep in a heartening number of young people such as the Youth Policy Institute students whose biodiesel activities are described on page 5. Unfortunately, providing free admission to this annual fundraiser, usually the only ticketed event that GASP stages, defeats the purpose of generating revenue to support our year-round education and advocacy work.

If you would like to make a tax-deductible contribution that will underwrite an interested person's participation in "Transportation Solutions," please note "event ticket sponsor" on the memo line of your check for \$35 and send it to the GASP office.

If you're attending the October 1 event and can come early to help set up or stay afterwards to help clean up, your help will be greatly appreciated! There also are openings for volunteer tasks to be done in advance of the event. To help, just email your availability information to mjackson@gasp-pgh.org. Thank you! 🚲

Long Live Wine

An outstanding Spanish writer of the 19th century, Rosalia de Castro, declared about sangria: "After God, long live wine." This festive wine drink is sure to be the perfect companion to the tapas being served at GASP's annual event on October 1.

Last month the Pittsburgh Business Times pronounced that Pittsburgh is tapping into tapas, "the Spanish dining custom...which features small plates, light fare and flair for variety in dining light." Not meant to be a full meal, it is a way of eating lightly and healthfully. The smaller portions enable banqueters to sample various kinds of tapas.

Are you a courageous cook who would like to try your hand at preparing a tapa dish for this event? If so, GASP will supply you with a number of excellent, make-ahead tapas recipes, mostly from the classic 1985 Penelope Casas cookbook, *Tapas: The Little Dishes of Spain*. From marinated dishes, salads and pates, to tapas in sauces, to tiny filled puff pastry tartlets, every level of recipe difficulty is represented. To learn more about this unusual volunteer opportunity, please email mjackson@gasp-pgh.org. 🚲

Reminder: You can **read this newsletter online** in the form of a pdf file (Adobe Acrobat required) and help us save paper (and printing/ mailing costs). E-mail the editor at hotline@gasp-pgh.org if you'd prefer get a downloadable pdf link via e-mail (instead of a hard copy) when the next issue of the Hotline is published. Prompt delivery of the GASP newsletter, whether via hard copy or a pdf version, is one of the benefits of GASP membership.

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